

TOURISM TRAILBLAZERS

ILLUMINATE ADELAIDE



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About Illuminate Adelaide

- The brainchild of co-creative directors and founders, Rachael Azzopardi and Lee Cumberlidge, Illuminate Adelaide is Australia's newest major winter event. Celebrating light, music, art, technology and innovation, the event is part of our state's year-round calendar of events, designed to entice visitors and locals to get out and about in our city during the quieter winter months. The inaugural event also featured programs in regional South Australia, including Mount Gambier, Limestone Coast and Tumby Bay, Eyre Peninsula. The Adelaide event was held in July/August 2021 - over a year into the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges faced

- Getting a new major event up and running during a pandemic was a huge effort with extra coordination, planning and contingencies in place.
- During its opening weekend, in July 2021, Adelaide was lashed with extreme weather, which meant the official opening was postponed by two nights due to the impact on the outdoor program. Over 35,000 tickets were refunded or re-issued.
- Lockdown in the middle of the event for seven days due to a COVID outbreak meant all indoor exhibitions and music events had to be postponed or cancelled during this period.

Overcoming adversity

- Good planning is key. Having designed the event to run during a pandemic, meant the majority of programming was outdoors and spread out across Adelaide's CBD to ensure adequate ventilation and social distancing. This meant that the event could resume as soon as the lockdown was lifted.
- Working collaboratively gets you through anything. By working in partnership with all stakeholders from the get-go, the Illuminate Adelaide team were able to extend the season for some major ticketed events after lockdown. For example, the team called upon their good working relationships with SA Health, Adelaide Botanic Gardens and Zoos SA to continue 'Light Cycles', 'Light Creatures' and 'Van Gogh Alive' at reduced capacity. The free outdoor program was also able to resume for a final weekend after lockdown lifted.
- Being adaptable means the show can go on. The Illuminate Adelaide team were so committed to ensuring as much of what had been planned for 2021 could go on that they extended events

well beyond the original date. The final event for Illuminate Adelaide 2021 is due to be held on 18 May 2022, The Avalanches with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra - ten months after they were originally scheduled to perform.

Lessons learnt

- Build it and they will come. Rachael, Lee and their team were overwhelmed by the positive response they received from the public once they re-opened. Continuing with their event gave people confidence to attend, embrace winter and engage with what was on offer.
- Plan to be flexible. After the 2021 event, the Illuminate Adelaide team is planning well in advance, including the ability to extend the event if need be. In 2022, the CBD program will be longer than the inaugural program, allowing time to pivot and be flexible for the duration.
- Continuous improvement. After being hit by one of the worst storms in recent years, the team is applying lessons learnt about weather into this year's contingencies.

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We have a lot of amazing tourism offerings here, and we are thrilled to be part of that by providing an event that encourages visitation during winter.

Rachael Azzopardi and Lee Cumberlidge
Illuminate Adelaide

The Illuminate Adelaide approach

- Constant communication allowed the team to get through the challenges together, to stay positive and deliver a successful event.
- Don't be afraid of taking risks. Rachael and Lee launched a new event during a global pandemic, seeing the challenge as an opportunity to reinvigorate the city and get people off their couches in the middle of winter. There is a way through any challenge if you plan and are prepared to adapt.

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